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IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1948

CLARENCE MILTON CALHOUN,
ALVIS EARL LANHAM, and
J. B. RUSSELL,

Petitioners

—versus—

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent

No. 725

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

and

BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF PETITION

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Attorneys for Petitioners.



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TO THE HONORABLE CHIEF JUSTICE, AND THE
ASSOCIATE JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT
OF THE UNITED STATES:

Your petitioners, CLARENCE MILTON CALHOUN,
ALVIS EARL LANHAM and J. B. RUSSELL, respectfully show as grounds for the issuance of a Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit:

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF THE MATTERS INVOLVED.

About nine o'clock P. M., on the 18th day of February, 1948, the Chief of Police of Monahans, Texas, observed an automobile occupied by three men,—one of whom he thought was Calhoun. The officer took the license number of the car. He followed the car and saw it stop near a jewelry store, pass the Post Office several times, and on one occasion stop about a block from the Post Office.

On the morning of February 19, 1948, the Post Master at Monahans discovered that the Post Office had been burglarized. A report of the burglary was made to the City Police and to the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police notified the Postal Inspector at Abilene, Texas, and called the Department of Public Safety at Austin, Texas. He learned that the license on the car he had observed the night before had been issued in the name of Lanham, and that Lanham had a criminal record. During the day of the 19th of February, 1948, the Post Office Inspectors arrived in Monahans and took charge of the investigation.

On the evening of February 19, 1948, the officers in Monahans went to Odessa, Texas, some thirty-five miles distance, to Lanham's home. Lanham and Russell were sitting in the car in front of Lanham's home when the officers arrived. They were arrested and taken to the Sheriff's office at Odessa. At the Sheriff's office in Odessa, in the presence of two officers from Monahans, two from Odessa, and the Postal Inspectors, several of whom were armed, Lanham and Russell were questioned

but the officers got no information from them except where they lived. Lanham was cursed by one of the officers, but not otherwise abused at that particular time. At this instant, under the record, the officers were not possessed of information sufficient to have obtained a valid search warrant. At the Sheriff's office Lanham was told that the officers wanted to search his home at Odessa; that they did not have, but could obtain, a search warrant. Lanham replied that he could not keep them from searching his house. The officers, with Lanham in custody, returned to Lanham's house. Lanham unlocked the door (because he did not want the officers to break it in) and opened the door because the officers were armed, and he feared physical violence to his person (which he subsequently received). The officers entered his home (without any search warrant) and there found money including a roll of coins which subsequently developed to bear the finger prints of a clerk employed at the Post Office in Monahans. It was the finding of this money, and particularly the wrapped coins, that connected Lanham with the offense.

The room occupied by Calhoun in a house belonging to Sam Tomme, was searched and there was found a torn one dollar bill subsequently identified by a clerk employed at the Monahans Post Office as having been stolen.

Motions to suppress such evidence on the ground that it was unlawfully obtained by Government officers without search warrants, were overruled by the Court.

Upon trial Petitioners were convicted and sentenced to five years confinement, and a fine of \$500.00 for the burglary, and three years cumulative confinement for theft.

The Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit affirmed the judgment of the trial Court holding that Lanham had waived his constitutional rights and consented to the search of his home; that Calhoun had no authority over the room he occupied in the home of Tomme and therefore could not question the search of his room by the officers without his consent and without a search warrant since Tomme had consented to such search.

The judgment of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit was rendered on February 16, 1949, and petition for rehearing was denied on March 15, 1949.

The controlling questions before the Court are: (1) whether Lanham voluntarily waived his constitutional rights and consented to the search of his home, without warrant; and, (2) the admissibility of the evidence discovered by the search of the room of Calhoun, made without his consent, and without search warrant.

JURISDICTION

Petitioners rely upon Rule 38, of the Rules of the Supreme Court of the United States as conferring jurisdiction because the decision of the Court of Appeals in this case conflicts with the decisions of other Courts of Appeals and of the Supreme Court of the United States on the same matters.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

The propositions involved herein, are as follows: (1) Did Lanham voluntarily waive his rights under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and consent to the search of his home without

warrant so as to render admissible against him the fruits of such search; and (2) did Calhoun have sufficient control over the room he occupied in the Tomme residence to have the protection of the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and render inadmissible as evidence the fruits of the search of his room without his consent and without a search warrant?

REASONS RELIED UPON FOR ALLOWANCE OF WRIT OF CERTIORARI

Your petitioners contend that a Writ of Certiorari should be allowed and that the decision of the United States Court of Appeals be reversed by this Court for the following reasons: (1) The decision of the Court of Appeals in this case that Lanham voluntarily waived his constitutional rights and consented to the search of his home is in conflict with the decision of this Court in Johnson vs. United States, 68 S. Ct, 367, and Amos vs. United States, 255 U. S. 313; the decision of the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in U. S. vs. Asendio, 171 Fed. (2) 122; and the decision of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in Ray vs. U. S. 84 Fed. (2) 654.

The decision of the Court of Appeals in this case holding that Calhoun did not have sufficient control of the room he occupied in Tomme's home to have the protection of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States is contrary to the decision of the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Brown vs. U. S. 83 Fed. (2) 383.

WHEREFORE, your Petitioners respectfully pray that Writ of Certiorari issue out of and under the seal of this Court directed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and that the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals be reversed by this Court, and your petitioners pray for such other and further relief in the premises as to this Court may seem meet and just.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE MILTON CALHOUN,
ALVIS EARL LANHAM,
J. B. RUSSELL,

Petitioners

By Clarence M. Calhoun
Counsel for Petitioners

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BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF PETITION
FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

May it please the Court:

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Reference is here made to the summary statement in the petition which is made a part of this brief.

ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR

1. The Trial Court and the Court of Appeals erred in holding that Lanham waived his constitutional rights and

consented to the search of his home, thereby rendering admissible the evidence thus obtained by Government officers without a warrant.

2. The Trial Court and the Court of Appeals erred in holding that Calhoun's occupancy of the room in the Tomme home was not of such character as to afford him protection of the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and permit him to complain of evidence found by government officers in a search of his room made without his consent and without a warrant.

ARGUMENT UNDER FIRST ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR

The principles of law involved herein are of fundamental importance to the general public, and especially to those who are accused of crime and brought to trial in a court of law. In this case there were no exceptional circumstances justifying, in the name of effective law enforcement, the invasion of Lanham's home without a warrant. He was under arrest and the premises were permanent and no evidence was threatened with removal or destruction. As a matter of fact, under the record, the only information the government officers had prior to the search of Lanham's home was a suspicion that Lanham may have been connected with the burglary because his car had been seen near the Post Office and Lanham had a criminal record. Lanham was told, so the officers testified, that they did not have a warrant, but could obtain one. We submit that the officers did not have any information constituting probable cause, and that they could not have obtained a valid warrant.

The Government's sole contention with respect to the search is that Lanham consented to the search. However, when due consideration is given to the attending circumstances, petitioner's "go ahead", and "I can't stop you" did not constitute consent. It was a submission to armed authority after verbal abuse with fear of personal violence which he subsequently received, rather than a voluntary waiver of his constitutional right. It is respectfully submitted that the Trial Court and the Court of Appeals departed from the principles laid down in the Johnson, Di Re, and Truliano cases.

The Government cannot be permitted to justify the arrest and search simply by what the search revealed.

The decision conflicts with Johnson vs. United States, 68 S. Ct. 367; Amos vs. United States, 41 S. Ct. 266; United States vs. Asendio, 171 Fed. (2) 122; Ray vs. United States, 84 Fed. (2) 654.

ARGUMENT UNDER SECOND ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR

Calhoun was a roomer in a house owned by Sam Tomme. He did not pay rent, but Calhoun had the full use and occupancy of this particular room. Calhoun did not consent to its search by government officers and was not present at the time of the search. Tomme permitted the officers to enter his home and let them into the room occupied by Calhoun. We cannot see how this type of search could be justified any more than one made of a hotel room or an apartment where government officers are given access to a room though the services of a bell boy or maid, or caretaker. It was held in Brown vs.

United States, 83 Fed. (2) 383, that roomers in a private dwelling were protected by constitutional prohibition of unreasonable search and seizure.

WHEREFORE, petitioners respectfully pray for a review of the decision of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and that the judgment be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,

William H. Day
Counsel for Petitioners

